



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR

Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)

Christopher S. Brittan Powell

Jason W. Papanikolas

Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes December 6, 2021 | 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency and was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents could comment by calling (301) 474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov.

Call to Order

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present at the meeting were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Christopher Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, and Councilmember Ethan Sweep. Staff present were Town Manager Laura Allen, Public Works Director Brad Pudner, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Also present were students Marwa Mansour, Baylee Martin, and Jason Haslup from the University of Maryland for the CCC Student Presentation, Jennifer Hawkins from Prince George's County 311, Claudia Marin and Patricia Blackwell for Employ Prince George's Inc., Tony Ruffin and Barbara Gonzolez from Pepco, and Steve Beckham and Jim McGinnis for the Men's Basketball League.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey reported that the Prince George's County indoor mask mandate has been extended until at least late January. She also let everyone know that the Town Meeting on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 will be the first in-person meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic, and that there will be a 15 person capacity limit, including Council and staff. She added that overflow will be in the Senior Center and masks will be required. Residents may still participate remotely, by calling in or sending emails as the meeting will be live streamed to the Town website and the television channels.

2. Approval of Agenda

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the agenda. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion Items

a. CCC Student Presentation

Director Pudner introduced the students and expressed gratitude for working with the students. The students of UMD spoke about the ArcGIS mapping of the public trees in the south section of Berwyn Heights, including preparing visualizations that could differentiate between tree type and condition, and creating a plan for future tree inventories of Berwyn Heights. The final report will include an online map with the sample data, visualizations of the findings, and the plan document for inventory

maintenance. There were graphs and documentation of the different types of tree diversity, visualizations of the invasive species, and tree conditions and tree maintenance recommendations. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about the “other” category of tree species. This category was used when there were only one or two of that tree type in Town. The mapping of the trees will identify the individual trees and species. CM Papanikolas inquired about the technology used and if tree maintenance was done, could things be updated in real time. The students explained that if an ArcGIS license was purchased by the Town those things could be updated in real time. Director Pudner and the students discussed either the possibility of an intern to continue the program or an ongoing relationship with UMD to complete the inventory.

b. 311 New System Orientation, Jennifer Hawkins

Jennifer Hawkins reviewed the new County 311 system, including the 311 On the Go system. She reviewed the mobile app and web portal as well as the current 311 call center. The launch will be happening soon. The County is in the final stages of testing the mobile app and the web portal. The service request types have been reduced from over 150 types to around 60. There are new features such as FAQs, the ability to find services, add photos, locations, and tracking service requests. The new system will be easier to use than ever before. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if the municipalities will be notified when a request is made that would not be in the jurisdiction of the County, but rather the Town. Ms. Hawkins explained that the person submitting the request would receive a notification that the request is outside the jurisdiction of the County and then direct the requestor to the correct agency in order to make that request.

c. EPG returning citizens program presentation

TM Allen introduced Patricia Blackwell and Claudia Marin from Employ Prince George's, Inc (EPG). She was excited to present the possible collaboration with Hyattsville and EPG to fill vacant positions in Public Works. EPG is a bridge between job seekers and businesses. Ms. Marin shared the types of *Demographic Programs* (and which populations are served by each), and the *Industry Bridge Program* options, which provide training for in-demand jobs. Ms. Blackwell shared the customized proposal for the Town. The goal is to hire returning citizens who reside in Berwyn Heights and the surrounding areas. Four participants would be recruited through information sessions that would result in 12 weeks of training and work experience with the Town. Participants are paid a stipend of \$12/hr by EPG during the training period; if hired, Berwyn Heights would be expected to continue to pay a minimum of \$12/hour. The proposed schedule would have the training ending in late July 2022. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about the participants and what parameters would be included in choosing candidates. Ms. Blackwell explained those requirements are up to the Town to determine. TM Allen reported that beyond the training the Town would follow their normal hiring process. Ms. Marin reiterated that the Town needs to be clear about what they want in candidates. CM Brittan-Powell asked for clarification and Ms. Blackwell stated that this is not a work release program. CM Papanikolas asked where in the release process that EPG begins working with candidates. Ms. Marin explained that they work with them throughout the release process.

d. Pepco charging stations, Tony Ruffin

Pepco is working with municipalities to place public electric vehicle (EV) charging

stations in the public right of way: present were Tony Ruffin and Barbara Gonzolez. TM Allen reviewed the parameters of the program, including that the chargers must be accessible to the public and not too close to the existing charging stations that the Town already has. A location near the police department in the public right of way was located. Users would purchase the electricity via an app. The Town Attorney has reviewed and suggested changes to the agreement that Pepco has agreed to. The charging stations are level 2 charging stations, but they are 7.7kw, making them a faster charging Level 2 station. CM Brittan-Powell raised the question of where the stations are being placed, expressing concerns about the location that was chosen. Ms. Gonzalez and Mr. Ruffin explained the details of the program stating the reasons why the current location was chosen, however Pepco is open to looking at additional locations. Mr. Ruffin also clarified that the chargers are part of Pepco's program and at no time is Pepco going to be asking the Town for maintenance. Ms. Gonzalez suggested that the Town contact the Maryland SHA to request signs to direct people to the new charging stations. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if it was required to reserve the parking spaces for EVs. She had concerns about the availability of parking for police vehicles which are not EVs. It was mentioned the Police Chief is supportive of this location, as BHPD will be getting EVs. MPT Kulpa-Eddy also had a question on the ability of the Town to cancel this agreement in the future (if necessary); TM Allen will work with Mr. Ruffin to clarify language in the License Agreement. CM Brittan-Powell expressed interest in having a Level 3 charger in the Town. Ms. Gonzalez stated that Level 3 chargers need to have a large amount of traffic to be qualified for Level 3 chargers (DC fast chargers), to justify that type of investment in infrastructure.

e. M-NCPPC Community Center Use Agreement Extension for Men's League Basketball

TM Allen presented a draft resolution that will give the Mayor the authorization to execute an extension agreement with Park and Planning in order to allow the League use of the BHCC basketball courts while negotiations continue on a new agreement. There was considerable discussion on the differences between the current use agreement and the proposed use agreement. Present from the Men's League were Steve Beckham and Jim McGinnis. Mr. Beckham informed that despite the name, women are eligible to play as well. MPT Kulpa-Eddy suggested an edit in the resolution language to reflect that the Men's Basketball League is an official Berwyn Heights Town Organization and remove the language about it being a "parks and recreation league". The revised resolution will be on the December 8, 2021 Town Meeting agenda.

f. Outside meeting equipment/heaters

CM Brittan-Powell opened discussion on the feasibility of creating meeting areas outside during the COVID times, so that in-person events can occur outside. He expressed interest in purchasing propane heaters and tenting for the Town to use to facilitate outdoor events during colder months. CM Sweep asked if CM Brittan-Powell had any options and prices to present to Council to consider. CM Brittan-Powell stated that he has not researched this yet, as he is seeking feedback before doing so. CM Papanikolas stated that he'd be willing to help research the costs. Mayor Dewey stated that she would not be in favor of purchasing heaters for Town Council meetings at this time because when she has engaged residents about the subject she has not heard favorable comment. CM Sweep remarked on the logistical issues in moving Council

meetings outside, such as cameras, noise, and weather; it may be necessary to acquire electronics designed for outdoor use. Mayor Dewey expressed that Maryland Open Meetings Act requires reasonable access and adequate notice. The Councilmembers discussed their concerns regarding meeting notice and cost. MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Papanikolas expressed a desire to see cost estimates before getting into details of how a meeting area might be organized.

g. Election schedule

TM Allen presented the staff report, mentioning the two dates that have some flexibility and emphasizing the rest of the dates are set by Ordinance, either by a specific date or a specific time interval between events. MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she believed Council should not be involved in the decision-making regarding selection of the election judges, to avoid the appearance of any political pressure being placed on the judges. She believes the Election Ordinance asks the Town Clerk to select and present the slate of judges to the Council. CM Papanikolas agreed that there should be a layer of separation between election judges and Councilmembers that may be running for reelection. Staff will revise the election schedule to reflect that staff will present a slate to Council to review, rather than “interview” the applicants. CM Sweep pointed out an error in the dates in April which Staff will remedy and represent to Council at the Town Meeting. There was support for the “League of Women Voters” to moderate Candidate’s night.

h. County Climate Action Plan Comment Letter

Mayor Dewey reviewed the Climate Action Plan letter. CM Sweep suggested a couple of edits to the language. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if there is data on how marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by the threats of climate change. Mayor Dewey and CM Sweep shared instances of how some populations are more affected than others.

i. Proposed ARPA spending process

The Mayor and Council spent considerable time discussing the next steps in the ARPA spending process. Mayor Dewey stated that Council has completed the public engagement process that the Council had outlined earlier in the year. This agenda item is presented to engage the next steps in the process. CM Brittan-Powell stated that he would like Council to determine their selection criteria. Council discussed using either a rubric to determine projects or rather using a more fluid approach. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about the final deadline to make a decision. Mayor Dewey and TM Allen explained that the timeline is self-imposed but is a function of it being incorporated in the FY23 budget. MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that Council wasn’t elected knowing that they’d have an additional 2.75 million dollars to spend, and that waiting to commit some of the funds could potentially wait until after the election. Mayor Dewey stated that there has been a public engagement process and every Council meeting is a public meeting open to community input. TM Allen also stated that the budget process is a public process and public engagement would continue then. CM Brittan-Powell suggested that the projects proposed may not be equitable in terms of access to residents who are generally underserved. He also suggested the idea of hiring an ARPA consultant. Mayor Dewey stated that from her perspective projects would always be viewed with an equity lens and that consultants would be chosen for specific projects

based on their area of expertise. CM Papanikolas stated that he understood that many communities using consultants are using them on ways to manage the actual funds from an accountancy point of view rather than to how to use the funds.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey reminded everyone that the indoor mask mandate has been extended until late January and encouraged everyone who is eligible to get a booster of the Covid vaccine. She reminded everyone that the Town Meeting will be in person, but with a 15 person capacity based on the room size with overflow space provided. She reviewed the Legislative Dinner. She noted that PGCMA is hosting a legislative “meet and greet” that she will be attending with CM Papanikolas. She thanked everyone involved in the tree lighting and craft fair. She reviewed the Holiday Town office closures. She flagged two upcoming Police Department events, including Cocoa with the PoPo and Santa’s Mailbox. She also reminded people of the house watch form available on the Town Website.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy shared that she spoke at the Prince George’s County Council meeting, providing public comment on the County redistricting map. Unfortunately, the County Council decided to carve up District 3. She attended the joint meeting of the Prince George’s County and Montgomery County chapters of the Maryland Municipal League, the District 3 Leaders Appreciation Reception, the Berwyn Heights Virtual Legislative Dinner, and the Prince George’s County School Board Transformation Task Force meeting. She also had four announcements, including the PG County Executive’s Virtual Town Hall on Covid, the Prince George’s County School Board Transformation Task Force listening session, Maryland Health Care Plans open enrollment period, and the Emergency Broadband Program, which is being replaced but still taking applications until the end of the year. All the links for more information on these announcements are posted on the Town website. She also mentioned the Rec Council will be meeting virtually and in-person in the G.Love room on December 7.

CM Papanikolas deferred his report until the Town Meeting.

CM Brittan-Powell also deferred his report until the Town Meeting and he thanked TM Allen for attending the Tree Lighting.

CM Sweep reviewed that snow was predicted for Wednesday and that it could impact the recycling schedule. He encouraged everyone to check the Town Website and Social Media for updates. He reviewed that the Town is looking into a text message alert system to share this type of information and mentioned there are changes to the trash schedule due to the Holidays.

5. Resident & Community Comments

There were no resident or community comments.

Adjournment

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by CM Papanikolas. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:22 pm.